Flashback

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FLASHBACK

Journal of the Washington County Historical Society
Preserving the Past for the Future

Volume 63 Spring 2013 Number 1

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Courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum

On the cover: A painting titled "Bridge Builders" by George Gordon Snyder depicts Civilian Conservation Corps workers building a wooden bridge along an upper bridal path at Devil's Den State Park in 1935.

The Development of Devil's Den State Park

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is the runner-up for the Walter J. Lemke Prize for best historical article submitted to the Flashback in 2012. It was written by Frank Burggraf, a professor emeritus of landscape architecture at the University of Arkansas.

By Frank Burggraf

Devil's Den in Washington County Arkansas is one of several state parks developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. This account places the development of the camps, the role of some of the persons responsible and the challenges of the expansion and maintenance of the facilities in the historical context of the creation of the parks.

Background

For most of the early history of the United States and its frontiers, land and resource exploitation was the accepted policy. Unreserved and unappropriated lands were public domain and there were no federal land laws pertaining to most of it. There was therefore no management and no protection from damage or abuse. Public land policy was marked by vacillation, blundering and in many cases outright plundering and fraud. Surprisingly, it was in Arkansas that the first positive step was taken toward the preservation of public land:

> "Although the first reservation of a natural resource for general public use and enjoyment was established so long ago as 1832, when the Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas was created, this act of Congress marked no definite policy of conservation, for these hot springs were reserved 'for the future disposal of the United States' and in order to prevent private exploita-

> tion. In 1864 Congress granted the State of California the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Trees Grove for use as a state park. While recognition was given to permanent public ownership of a natural resource, it appears that this was a function to be exercised by the state rather than by the Federal Government. First acceptance of public control and administration of natural resources as a Federal function for areas of the public domain embracing values of national importance dates from 1872, when the Yellowstone National Park was created."[1]

While Yellowstone marks the start of the national park system, no further parks were created until 1898. While this set aside land for public purposes, outdoor recreation was not yet of national significance. In 1891 the Yellowstone Park Timberland Reserve was created, marking the first public conservation of natural resources for their economic value. From then until 1928 the system of national forests grew to 151.

In 1906, the American Antiquities Act was passed authorizing the president to set aside areas of federal land for the preservation of historic landmarks and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.

People visiting parks are almost never conscious of the design of the park or its facilities. Park designers try to work their craft inconspicuously, drawing as little attention to their creations as possible so the park visitor can give full attention to enjoyment of the place. The parking lots, comfort stations, picnic tables and trails are taken for granted by the typical family that has come for the day or the campers staying for several nights. No one even questions that parks themselves are a legitimate responsibility of government. That now appears to be commonly accepted and understood.

Frederick L. Olmsted founded the profession of landscape architecture and made parks its province in two bold strokes; the creation of Central Park in New York City and his Preliminary Report (1865) on the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Trees.[2]

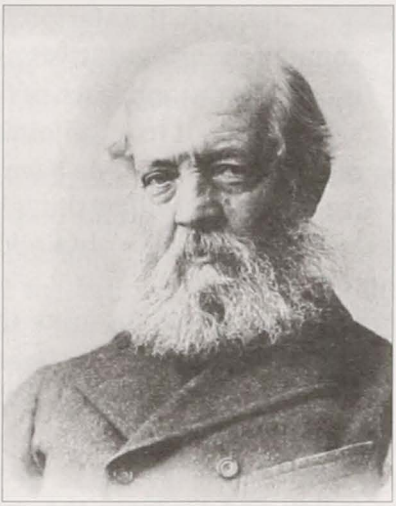
In Central Park he established a facility designed for the recreation and enjoyment of the average urban dweller. A new concept that provided not only for the privileged few but the numerous working stiffs and their families. In his report on the Yosemite valley he argued eloquently for the preservation and conservation of scenic beauty and wilderness. He envisioned necessary improvements for the enjoyment of visitors:

> "...a road to the Mariposa Grove that shall be carried completely around it, so as to offer a barrier of bare ground to the approach of fire, which nearly every year sweep upon it from adjoining country, and which during the last year alone have caused injuries, exemption from which it will be thought before many years would have been cheaply obtained at ten times the cost of the road.
>
> "Within the Yosemite the Commissioners propose to cause to be constructed a double trail, which on the completion of our approach road, may be easily made suitable for the passage of a single vehicle, and which shall enable visitors to make a complete circuit of the valley and to cross the meadows at certain points, reaching all the finer points of view to which it can be carried without great expense.
>
> "...The object of this arrangement is to reduce the necessity for artificial construction within the narrowest practicable limits, destroying as it must the natural conditions of the ground and presenting an unpleasant object to the eye in the midst of the scenery. The trail or narrow road could also be kept more in the shade, could take a more picturesque course, would be less dusty, and could be much more cheaply kept in repair. From this trail a few paths would also need to be formed, leading to points of view which would only be accessible to persons on foot. Several small bridges would also be required."[3]

Olmsted continued the narrative arguing for cabins to be

constructed nearest those places of greatest natural beauty. It is also of interest to note that he insists these recreation facilities be made available to women:

"These cabins would be let to tenants with the condition that they should have constantly open one comfortable room as a free resting place for visitors, with proper accommodations for women, and they should keep constantly on hand in another room a supply of certain simple necessities for camping parties, including tents, cooking utensils and provisions to be sold at rates to be limited by terms of the contract."[4]



Frederick Law Olmstead

Olmsted made the observation that if the measures which he advocated to protect the Yosemite valley were taken, the scenic resources could be preserved so that one day in the future, after a million visitors the park could continue to serve without compromise of its beauty. His estimation of a century was off somewhat- the visitation of Yosemite hit a million in the 1950s. However, all of the national parks were feeling the pressure of increased public use by the late 1920s. Increasingly the national park people proposed to divert some of the activity elsewhere:

"Municipal and state parks and national forests together offer outdoor recreation opportunities in countless numbers, and easily accessible. The (Federal) Government finds itself duplicating these areas down to

> the smallest picnic park. We have gotten away from the fundamental principle that the Government should do nothing that an individual municipality or state can do for itself, and we are competing in little things, benumbing public spirit and thwarting local pride of possession and development. The rapidly growing popularity of our National Parks Systems marks a time when these 'first temples' may safely take their proper place in the higher education of our people in the 'finer things', which both physical and mental recreation will necessarily be associated."[5]

At the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation in December, 1925, then Secretary of the Interior Hoover said:

> "The movement to foster public parks for human outdoor life and conservation of wild life is one of our most beneficent public endeavors. And in it we need more action by the individual states. We need also a distinction between the province and responsibilities of the States and the Federal Government. My own thought is that the national parks- the parks within the responsibility of the Federal Government should be those of outstanding scientific and spiritual appeal, those that are unique in their simulation and inspiration."[6]

Since most of the national parks were in the West, there have been recurring efforts to establish parks in many eastern states. Only in recent decades has that been successful and then only by adopting new definitions of park- eg. "national seashore". The argument was always that we ought not to diminish the park system by the inclusion of anything less spectacular than those places already protected.

Again, in December 1925, when the National Parks system was threatened with inclusions of unstandard areas in southern states, the American Association for the Advancement of Science passed the following:

> "Resolved, that the American Association for the

Advancement of Science recognizes the national parks as the means of preserving unique representations of the primitive and majestic in nature, and wishes to record its protests against additions to the National Park System, or change in policy, which may tend to lessen in fact or in public estimation their present high value as natural museums, their complete conservation from industrial uses, and their effectiveness as a national educational institution."[7]

Stephen T. Mather, director of the National Park Service, who was to turn down Petit Jean for inclusion in the National Park System, wrote:

"The National Parks System of the United States is unique both in its scenic exhibits and in the exceedingly high standards by which each candidate for admission to the system is judged. As now constituted, it is made up of areas of incomparable scenic grandeur. Each of the major national parks was selected for parkhood because of some distinctive feature, either scenic or prehistoric, which is of national importance and interest. Under the policy governing the establishment of national parks,

Stephen T. Mather

only one area of a particular type is considered for inclusion in the system, and each selected must represent the highest example of its particular type.

"The scenic supremacy of an area alone is not sufficient to gain its admission into the National Park System. It must also be susceptible to whatever development is necessary to make it available for use by the millions of park visitors who may care to use it, without which under the expressed demand of Congress, the National Park Service is to preserve unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

"Areas whose principal qualifications is adaptability for recreational uses are not, of course, of national park caliber. Proposed parks are measured by the standards set by the major parks of the system; hence the requirements are exacting. As long as these standards shall prevail there is no danger of too many national parks being established, or of the excellence of the present system being lowered."[8]

Never-the-less there was continuing pressure to create parks in the Southeast as it became apparent that profitable tourist business attended the creation of a national park.

The Great Depression and the Civilian Conservation Corps

When people today think of the Depression, the stock market crash of 1929 most often comes to mind. Unemployment in 1929 was 3 percent, but it was to rise to over 25 percent by 1933. In the Midwest it was drought that aggravated the misfortunes of the farmers. Arkansas was primarily an agricultural state and the majority of the farmers were tenants. With crop failures thousands fled to seek employment elsewhere. Many more struggled to survive with welfare assistance. Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeated the incumbent president, Herbert Hoover, in 1932. He took the oath of office on March 4, 1933, and within hours, as

his first official act decreed a national bank holiday and called a special session of Congress. Unlike his predecessors who relied on businessmen and financial wizards, Roosevelt's aides were scholars. They came to Washington prepared to implement the new deal that Roosevelt had proclaimed during the campaign. A blizzard of legislation was unleashed in a remarkably short span of time.

> "When Congress convened in special session on Thursday March 9, Secretary of the Treasury Woodin had ready for it the draft of an emergency banking bill. ... There was not time enough to have the bill printed. The half-dozen typewritten copies that were rushed to the Capitol the morning of March 9 still bore marginal notes and corrections scribbled in pencil. In the House of Representatives there was no pretense of committee consideration. Only a few of the leaders had even seen the text. As the House reading clerk finished reading the one copy available in that chamber, cries went up from the floor. 'Vote, vote, vote' Thirty-eight minutes later the bill was passed by acclimation. The Senate was slightly more deliberate. It listened to three hours of debate... before passing the bill 73 to 7. At 8:37 that night, F.D.R., with newsreel cameras focused on his desk in the White House, signed the first legislative enactment of the New Deal."[9]

Among the bills passed was an act establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps, actually "an act for the relief of unemployment through the performance of useful public work and for other purposes," introduced March 21 and enacted March 31. Never before was there such a mobilization of men and such a collaboration among diverse government departments. Conrad Wirth gives a detailed account of the implementation of the legislation and the events that followed. Of particular interest here is the portion of the effort he was selected to administer — the camps that would create the state parks. Wirth, a landscape architect with the National Park Service, was destined to become

its director. From a very modest staff of professionals the Park Service was to grow into the largest employer of landscape architects and park planners in the world, while at the same time creating an almost duplicate organization to provide the assistance to the creation of state parks. Wirth points out the modest origins of that effort with a look at the Park Service at the beginning of the New Deal:

> "Size of the staff was at a low ebb. Salaries were low; in 1932 they had been cut 10 percent across the board. But we were all glad to have jobs and plenty of work to do. When the CCC and other New Deal programs began, we were happy to be a part of them and to put in long hours, far into the night, with a sandwich and coffee at our desk for dinner.
>
> "We got great satisfaction in providing jobs for others. Highly qualified professionals – architects, landscape architects, engineers were available in all fields needed to carry out our programs successfully."[10]

Considering the difficulties in assembling and administering the leadership that was to direct the undertaking of such enormous scope, the fact that the results were uniformly excellent is difficult to explain. The idea of employing young men in this fashion was not universally welcomed:

> "William Green, President of the American Federation of Labor, voiced his opposition to the proposal in the joint Senate and House labor committee hearings on the bill on March 23. Green believed that the Army's supervision of the enrollees would lead to the militarization of American youth. Major General Douglas MacArthur, responding for the Army, stressed that the enrollees would not be given military training or be subjected to military discipline."[11]
>
> "The Department of Labor was to initiate a nationwide recruiting program; the Army was to condition and transport enrollees to the work camps; and the Park Service and Forest Service were to operate the

camps and supervise work assignments.

> "The President announced that Robert Fechner would be the Director of the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW). Fechner, a former labor union official, was an excellent choice. He was able to deflect concerns of the labor unions and was an effective administrator. The press continued to use the title, Civilian Conservation Corps and the name was officially changed to this in 1937."[12]

The president insisted that the camps be composed of 200 men doing work programs destined to last for six months and that he would personally approve the camp locations and work assignments. Another stipulation was that the bulk of the funds were to be spent on the labor costs relating to work projects and not for the procurement of expensive equipment — that is a bulldozer was not to be purchased since there were more than enough men to do the work.

The Park Service was allowed to hire a limited number of skilled local men, but the bulk of the work force was to be taken from the unemployed in large urban population centers.

On May 11 during the early mobilization efforts, veterans of World War I were permitted to join the ECW:

> "These men in their 30s and 40s were granted special camps, operated on a more lenient basis than the regular camps, and were selected by the Veterans Administration rather than the Labor Department."[13]

District directors supervised the work in the various states, and their staffs evaluated work projects and recommended future projects. Staff inspectors were chosen from the landscape architect and engineering professions, and they were responsible for the progress and quality of the projects and for revising and perfecting design plans. Herbert Maier, who Wirth describes as "an excellent architect" who had done some work for the National Park Service, agreed to take the Rocky Mountain District with headquarters in Denver. Arkansas was in the Rocky Mountain District.

The Rustic CCC Design Style

The organization of the CCC camps and their local situation had much to do with the type of facilities that were constructed. Often these facilities were a perfect example of the regional or local style expressed at its most rustic level. The traditional simple house or cabin influenced the design of shelters, cabins and administrative or concession buildings. Local materials, natural stone and timber particularly, were almost always used.

It appears that the rustic conception was well understood at the time throughout the nation as being the appropriate expression of park facility. The prototypes were the structures built in the National Parks and those private retreats built in the Adirondacks:

> "Toward the end of the nineteenth century, along with the hunters and fishermen who penetrated the wilderness to enjoy the pleasures of the outdoors and the abundant fish and game, came the wealthy of the Eastern establishment. They accepted the challenges of the hostile Adirondack environment and built their private retreats, often more complex and extensive than those of Newport or Saratoga. Comfort and luxury coexisted with a vague concept of 'roughing it'.
>
> "Camps evolved into complexes of unique and elaborate architectural forms. During the relatively short period from 1870 to 1930, Great Camp builders succeeded in creating a style that, although national popularized, rarely achieved the elaboration or refinement of these Adirondack prototypes. This vernacular style, with its mixture of logs, native stone, and decorative rustic work of twigs and branches, has been adopted for hotels in the Pacific Cascades, the Rockies, and the Northern Great Lakes, in private vacation homes, and most notably in National Park Service buildings across the country."[14]

The National Park Service came into being after the parks had been in operation for some time and many buildings had

been created by concessionaires and park rangers. Some of them were rustic merely by expediency, some by design. The railroads sought to serve the parks and often subsidized the design and construction of lodgings. By the far the most famous of these was the Old Faithful Inn, subsidized by the Northern Pacific Railroad. Robert C. Reamer was engaged to design the Inn and the nearby Railroad Station. The Inn was constructed during the winter of 1903 to 1904. The materials were the lodge-pole pine and the rock from within the park. Doing the construction in the winter enabled the timber to be harvested and moved by horse drawn sledges to minimize damage to the logs. The logs were used with the bark intact for most of the construction. The construction was entirely of logs and wood frame with an extraordinary interior space. It was and still is the largest log structure in the world. 700 feet long and 7 stories high. It was opened in 1904, Wings were added in 1915 and 1921. Thereafter park structures everywhere were constructed in the rustic fashion. Glacier Park Lodge was similarly constructed by the Great Northern Railroad in Montana in Glacier National Park.

Robert C. Reamer (1873-1938) was not only employed to design additions to the Inn but other accommodations in the rustic manner. At one dedication he is quoted to have stated:

> "I built it in keeping with the place where it stands. Nobody can improve upon that,.To be at discord with the landscape would be almost a crime. To try to improve it would be an impertinence."[15]

Mather and Albright campaigned for a professional organization. The American Civic Organization was particularly supportive and urged professional groups to support the concept.. When the American Society of Landscape Architects met in Boston in February, 1916, a session was devoted to the exploration of the national park problem and its relation to the landscape architecture profession. In response, the A.S.L.A. passed a resolution supporting the park bureau bill introduced by Congressman Kent of California in January, 1916:

"Whereas, the need has long been felt, not only for

more adequate protection of the surpassing beauty of those primeval landscapes which the National Park have been created to perpetuate, but also for rendering this landscape beauty more readily enjoyable through construction in these parks of certain necessary roads and buildings for the accommodations of visitors in a way to bring the minimum injury to these primeval landscapes ... (it is resolved) ... that the American Society of Landscapes endorses the Bill (H.R. 8668), entitled a Bill to Establish the National Park Service, and pledges its utmost efforts in cooperation with the American Civic Association to secure its passage."[16]

Harvard Landscape Architect, James S. Pray observed:

"Let me go on the record as believing that the surpassing beauty of our National Parks is neither safe, nor will be made enjoyable for the maximum number of people with the minimum injury to that landscape beauty , unless the administration of the National Park areas employs the best expert council it can secure in the profession of Landscape Architecture."

Pray then specified four areas where landscape expertise was essential.

"First, a careful determination of proper boundaries of t he National Parks, not arbitrary, as those at present, but in consonance with the topography and with landscape unity; second the development of comprehensive general plans for every National Park and Monument showing roads, bridges, trails, buildings, etc., so far as these may be needed, and at the same time can be built without injury to the landscape, and the adoption of a definitive policy of development; third, the approval of designs for buildings and other special structures; fourth, prescribing a system of intelligent and scrupulous maintenance having particular regard to the protection of the beauty of the landscape."[17]

The Bill to create the National Park Service passed Congress

and was signed by President Wilson on August 25, 1916. However, Mather collapsed with a nervous breakdown and Horace Albright was acting Director and Congress did not fund the Park Service until April 17, 1917, eleven days after the United States declared war on Germany.

When Mather returned to assume the direction of the National Park Service he made the following statement, dated May 13, 1918:

> "In the construction of roads, trails, buildings, and other improvements, particular attention must be devoted always to the harmonizing of these improvements with the landscape. This is a most important item in our program of development and requires the employment of trained engineers who either possess a knowledge of landscape architecture or have a proper appreciation of the aesthetic value of park lands. All improvements will be carried out in accordance with a preconceived plan developed in special reference to the preservation of the landscape, and comprehensive plans for the future development of the national parks on an adequate scale will be prepared as funds are available for this purpose."[18]

Charles P. Punchard, who had been landscape architect for the City of Washington was appointed as National Park Service Landscape Engineer. It was to be his responsibility:

> "...to plan employee's cottages, ranger station, gasoline and oil stations, automobile checking stations, comfort stations, etc., or to criticize plans submitted by the superintendents for such buildings."[19]

When Punchard arrived at Yellowstone in July 1918, the need for new roads, trails and structures was great and he had to deal with many eyesores and poorly located existing facilities.

One project which Punchard collaborated on with San Francisco architect, Charles Sumner was a Ranger's Club or dormitory for Yosemite. It displayed a Swiss facade reminiscent of the Great Northern's Glacier Park designs. Mather was pleased with

the result and announced it would serve as a model for needed additional construction at Yosemite.

Punchard was not able to keep up with the many demands for his service and he continued to identify many new problems that needed to be addressed. Mather hired an assistant for him. Punchard, however, died in November of 1920 and Hull assumed his position. Paul Klessig was hired in the assistants position. There followed many significant efforts at a variety of parks in the "non-intrusive park style.

In the northern Rocky Mountain parks of Yellowstone and Glacier the "trapper cabin" style of architecture matured under the guidance of the Landscape Engineering Division. Graceful log structures displayed purposely crude detail work such as whittled ends of logs on walls and rafters. Over the next several years many new buildings in several parks were produced, some with the assistance of architects hired to assist the landscape engineers, including a young Californian, Herbert Maier. Maier designed a succession of buildings following his initial success with the Yosemite museum.

Not all the new structures were of logs and stone but all were sympathetic to their site and contributed to the growing park design vocabulary. In retrospect it seems incredible that the professional staff of the National Park Service which was so small at the start of the depression was able to accomplish the work program that was thrust upon them. Most of the men who were hired in the early days had little or no academic training. Even Thomas Vint who replaced Hull when the latter chose not to accompany the change of office from Los Angeles to San Francisco learned most of his skills on the job beginning as a draftsman. Merel Sager was hired in the summer of 1928. He had been trained as a landscape architect at Harvard and he helped Vint write the first civil service exam for landscape architecture. He passed the test and earned a permanent position. In 1928 Mather authorized five additional landscape architect positions in Vint's shop and the previous title of landscape engineer was changed to landscape architect at Vint's instigation. By the fall

of 1931, the landscape Division consisted of 15 permanent and four temporary positions. Each new designer was trained in the park service rustic style. Once the great expansion of projects which the CC permitted took place it was no longer possible to train each professional in the San Francisco office as before. It is even more amazing that, at the same time, the park service was called upon to staff a state park assistance program that was even more ambitious than that of the camps assigned to national parks.

Herbert Maier, mentioned earlier, was one of those committed to the rustic concept. By 1934, he had moved his office from Denver to Oklahoma City from where he could direct the development of parks from Texas and Arkansas to the Dakotas. Like the other E.C.W. District officers he had difficulty in recruiting competent professionals.

> "Maier's District III design office supervised development of a number of state areas in Arkansas, including Petit Jean, Devil's Den, Crowley's Ridge Lake Catherine, and Mount Nebo. State Parks. Development of the Boyle Metropolitan park at Little Rock also came under Maier's responsibility."

Arkansas was one of the states that did not have a state park system when the National Park Service began to assist in the development of several parks under the CCC program. The idea of preserving some of Arkansas' natural beauty evidently predated that:

> "The idea of a great area for public recreation in Arkansas, which at the same time would conserve one of the few remaining primeval forests of our state had its beginning back in 1907; but at that time we knew nothing about State Parks. I simply knew that near my home was an area of surpassing natural beauty that ought to be conserved for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. In this I had the support of the Fort Smith Lumber Company, with whom I had come to this country as physician, and who owned most of

> the area that it was proposed to conserve. But after thinking and talking about it more or less constantly for fourteen years, during which time I received no helpful suggestion from any source, I was as much at a loss to how to proceed as in the beginning. Finally, knowing that it was not the proper step to take I asked our representative in Congress to introduce a bill providing for the acceptance of this small area- it was only 1,540 acres, as I recall- as a national park."[20]

In this account of the events, Hardison goes on to describe his meeting with Stephen Mather, for whom the lodge at Petit Jean was subsequently named. It is very likely in some measure due to Hardison's regard for Mather:

> "It happened that, as the bill was introduced, Stephen T. Mather, Director of the National Park Service, was en route to Hot Springs National Park, and our representative wired me to see Mr. Mather and try to enlist his support of the bill. After an hour's conversation with that kindliest and most courteous of men, and with his assistant, Arno B. Cammerer, now Director of the National Park Service, I was told that our area was not suitable for a national park and advised to turn my attention to bringing about its acceptance as a state park.
>
> "I had never heard of a state park, and I doubt that anybody in my state had; but I took Mr. Mather's advice, and sustained by his constant encouragement, in a comparatively short time I had the satisfaction of seeing Petit Jean State Park created by a special Act of the Arkansas Legislature. This was in February 1923, and in May of that year I attended the Third National Conference on State Parks at Turkey Run State Park in Indiana. There I came under the influence of Colonel Richard Lieber, Major W.A. Welch, Dr. L. H. Pammel and others who were leading the state park movement. A year of so later, Raymond H. Torrey came to Arkansas

as Field Secretary of the National Conference, and during this and several subsequent visits Mr. Torrey gave aid of the most constructive and helpful kind. More than any other man, we are indebted to him for beginning of a public interest in state parks in Arkansas.

"Though we had one state park as early as 1923 we did not have an adequate state park law until a few months ago. When Petit Jean was formed, responsibility for its administration, for want of a better agency, was placed in the reluctant hands of the State Highway Commissioner; and from one agency to another, mostly reluctant and altogether incompetent, the interests of the state park movement in Arkansas was shifted with changing political administrations until two years ago, when by sheer political accident we acquired a state park leader in the person of Attorney General Carl E. Bailey, ex officio Chairman of the State Park Commission, who saw something else in state parks than material for a new sort of campaign oratory.

"During his two years as chairman of the commission, Carl Bailey took more than perfunctory interest in state parks. He visited and became acquainted with the natural advantages and needs of each park. He envisioned the twofold scope of an intelligently planned and wisely administered system of parks in Arkansas, and when he became Governor last January, one of his first recommendations to the Legislature was the passage of an act that would create s state park commission with the authority and the means to undertake a constructive work in Arkansas.

"The bill that we have enacted in Arkansas is one recommended by the National Park Service, with slight alterations to fit the special needs of our State. It provides, in the first place, for an honorary commission – that is one whose members serve without pay- of five members appointed by the Governor, and selected

because of their interest in, and knowledge of, conservation and recreation; not because of the political influence they may have in their respective quarters of the State. The term of one member expires each year. The executive officer of the Commission is a State Park Director, who is paid a good salary and who is in the present instance a thoroughly competent man, having had four years' experience as project superintendent of our most important park."[21]

This man, Sam Davies, was the father of Ladd Davies, who under his father's direction designed and oversaw construction of the wonderful masonry arch bridge in Petit Jean. Ladd provided much anecdotal material for our study and, in turn, his son, Richard Davies, was to become Director of the Arkansas State Parks and is today Director of State Parks and Tourism. Hardison continued:

"The Commission may acquire by purchase, gift, trade, lease or condemnation any land that is deemed necessary or desirable for the extension of the park system. It also may declare any state-owned land including that forfeited for non-payment of taxes, a part of adjacent or near-by land park. By this means we have already added to Petit Jean Park approximately four hundred acres which we expect to consolidate with the main body by the purchase of intervening tracts. This process can be continued indefinitely bringing into the several park areas in the State thousands of acres of forest land at no cost at all.

"Until this provision was put into effect, as fast as timbered land reverted to the State, it was grabbed up by one or another operators of numerous small sawmills throughout the mountains and stripped of everything that would make a two-by-four . In one instance a tract actually touching Petit Jean Park was completely denuded of pine by one of these conscienceless operators and the lumber hauled through the park to town.

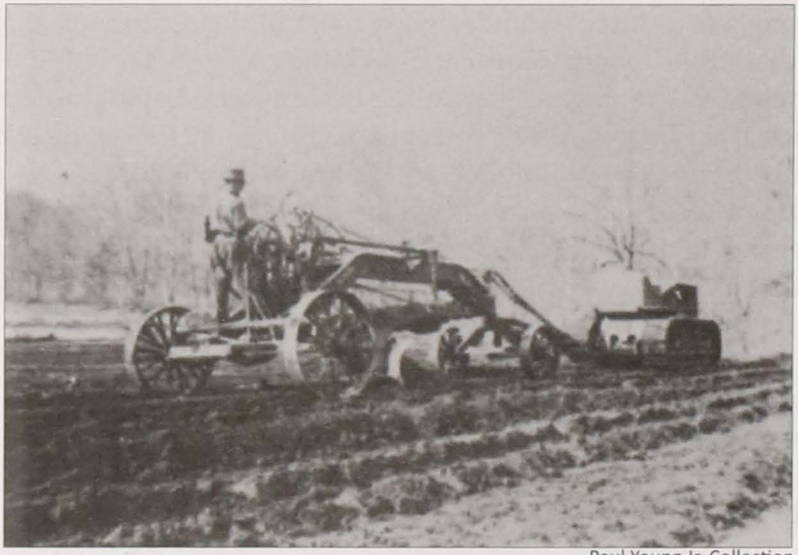
> "One of the most important provisions of our law is that designating the State Park Commission as the sole agency for control and management of state owned parks and recreation areas of all types. This vesting of exclusive authority in one commission has obvious advantages in efficiency and economy, and already has resulted in the prevention of the development of small areas that could not be justified by public need and which were in no sense conservation areas.
>
> "Other provisions embodied in the act make it possible for the Commission to deal competently with any situation which is likely to arise. On the whole, we believe that we have an act that meets our needs. But we recognize that our law, or the law of any State, must depend for its efficacy upon the ability and consecration of its administrators."[22]

It must be remembered that there were no "clients" for the parks being created during the days of the CCC. Few people had the wealth and leisure at the time and those who did had little inclination to travel to remote parts of the country to recreate. Only those areas of exceptional quality such as Yellowstone and Yosemite continued to attract visitors. The park projects were to keep men employed and coincidentally to train the men in craft skills.

Park Development at Devil's Den

Devil's Den has been state property since 1916. "Devil's Den State Park is a 2,500-acre Arkansas state park in Washington County, near West Fork, Arkansas. (It) is in the Lee Creek Valley in the Boston Mountains which are the southwestern part of the Ozarks."[23]

No development took place before the 1930s. "The valley protects the largest sandstone crevice area in the United States. The valley is littered with numerous sandstone caves, bluffs, ravines, rock shelters and crevices that provided an excellent hiding place for outlaws on the Butterfield Stage Line from 1858



Paul Young Jr. Collection

The road grader at Devil's Den, used to build the road into the valley of Lee Creek.

until the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861. With the onset of the war the rocky area was used by bands of Confederate guerillas as a hide out and staging area for conducting raids on the Union Army's Supply lines as well as civilian targets."[24]

There were were eventually two CCC camps at Devil's Den, one at the top of the valley, and one down in the valley itself. The first camp built the road which connected to West Fork. This graded highway required the blowing out the stumps and rocks and widening the bed with a grader. Finally, a roadside shelter was completed to overlook Lee's Creek.

The camp moved into the valley itself in the spring of 1935, with Bryan Sterns as project superintendent. He later became state parks director in 1945. A second unit was set up about the same time to construct the road to Winslow and build the cabins. This unit was run by Sam Watkins.

Stern's camp had a talented and able landscape architect,

Robert Kreilick, and Ben Shreve, an engineer. Watkins had Paul Young, an architect who designed most of the structures along with Harold Marsh, landscape architect, and W. C. Smith, engineer. Paul Young had begun his CCC career working in Little Rock at the office of an architect named Harding. He soon moved to the State Capitol Building where he worked on drawings for Mather Lodge to be constructed at Petit Jean, the first of the Arkansas CCC projects. He was sent to Petit Jean to supervise the construction of the lodge. When a second CCC camp was formed at Devil's Den, he became "Architectural Foreman."

Interviews with Paul Young and study of the archival original drawings make it clear that Paul Young and Robert Kreilick were the designers who were most productive and had the most impact on the form of the park elements. Few of the original drawings are attributed to Harold Marsh.

The Capabilities of the technical staff hired for each park was uneven. For each camp, 12 civilian specialists could be hired by the State. Two had to be civil engineers and two had to be landscape architect/engineers. In addition, there were several statewide employees: Leo Deiderich, a landscape architect, was one, and Graves, an Arkansas Inspector for the National Park Service was another. Most of the younger designers were relatively inexperienced, and depended upon direction from the N.P.S., their native intelligence and the advice of the skilled carpentry foreman and stone masons.

The relationship of the craftsmen or builders and the professional architect and landscape architect was clearly a crucial one in the CCC work. How much was designed on paper? How much was designed in the field? Drawings were done for major work such as cabins, road alinements, and parking lots. Supervision of the work by the designer was very direct. Paul Young and the crew foreman located cabins, supervised the clearing of the site, and strung the batter boards. The close attention paid by the architect to every stage of construction resulted in careful detailing in wood and stone- the joints where timber logs went together, the location of steps, the construction of roofs,

Paul Young Collection

The camp doctor, Lt. Jones, and Sam Watkins, superintendent of Camp No. 2 at Devil's Den (CCC No. 2763).

etc. Besides the evidences of competent carpentry, the skill of the stone mason is also very apparent, particularly in the stonework surrounding the cabins with the design depending on the placement of each successive rock , usually of a slightly different shape and size.

The design philosophy which links the craftsman to the designer was expressed by William Morris. (England, 1834-1897). In response to the mechanization of the industrial revolution, he asked for a return to the pride and skill of the medieval builder. Typically the Arts and Crafts style resulted in refined details. The CCC work involved the close cooperation of the designers and skilled workers. An unresolved disagreement among N.P.S. Personnel was whether to use old construction techniques (logs, stone foundations) or newer ones (conventional framing, concrete foundations). Both techniques were used throughout.

Ironically, many of the skills learned in the CCC camps were probably as useless as the skills glorified in the Arts and Crafts

Movement. In most cases time had simply passed these methods of construction by, even in the 1930s. In the years to come, the cost of construction, the lack of labor to move and place large stones, the modernist attitude toward design which denigrated the handmade hewn historic style in favor of direct application of materials such as concrete and steel, and the lack of opportunity to bring together the builder and designer at the job site doomed the continuation of this type of construction, even in State Parks.

A visitor to the Devil's Den site said:

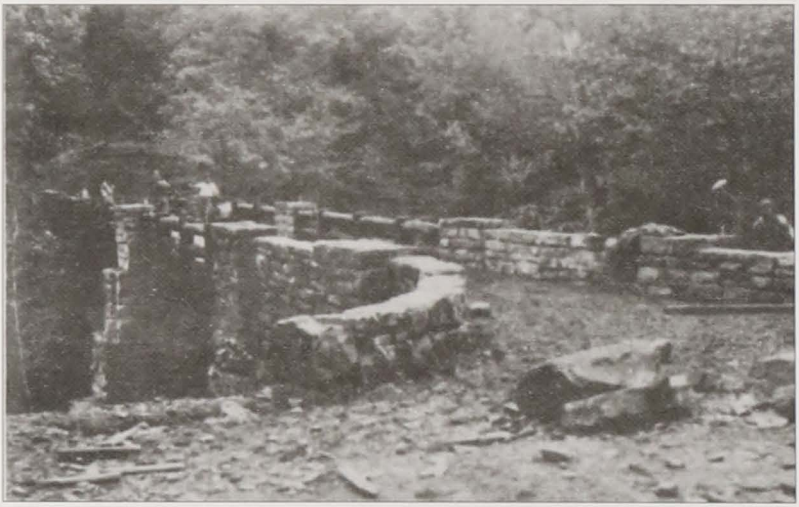
> "Masses of stone, often as large as temples or capitals, have tumbled into the chasms, or settled awry in chaotic position, leaving great clefts and cliffs. Over these, in primal confusion, mosses and lichens have grown gray-green cowls. A primitive vastness seizes the senses at every turn. The whole region is a challenge to the spirit of exploration."[25]

In contrast to Petit Jean, where two distinct areas were developed, Devil's Den was much more confined. Rather than being laid out along a bluff at the top of a mountain, it was nestled in a valley. The descent into the valley culminates in a view of a small lake held back by a spectacular dam. From West Fork the road passed a stone retaining wall, an entry sign and timber bridge which has since been replaced. This stone and timber bridge eventually linked the West Fork road to the Winslow road, and permitted entry and exit through the park via two directions. A turn set on masonry piers, it served as an excellent example of CCC park design. Unfortunately only the stone piers remain. The National Park Service's analysis of bridge design serves to emphasize its quality:

> "In general, bridges of stone or timber appear more indigenous to out natural parks than spans of steel or concrete. ... In nor park structure mare than bridges is it of such importance to steer clear of the common errors in masonry. Shapeless stones laid upon the manner of mosaic are abhorrent in the extreme... variety

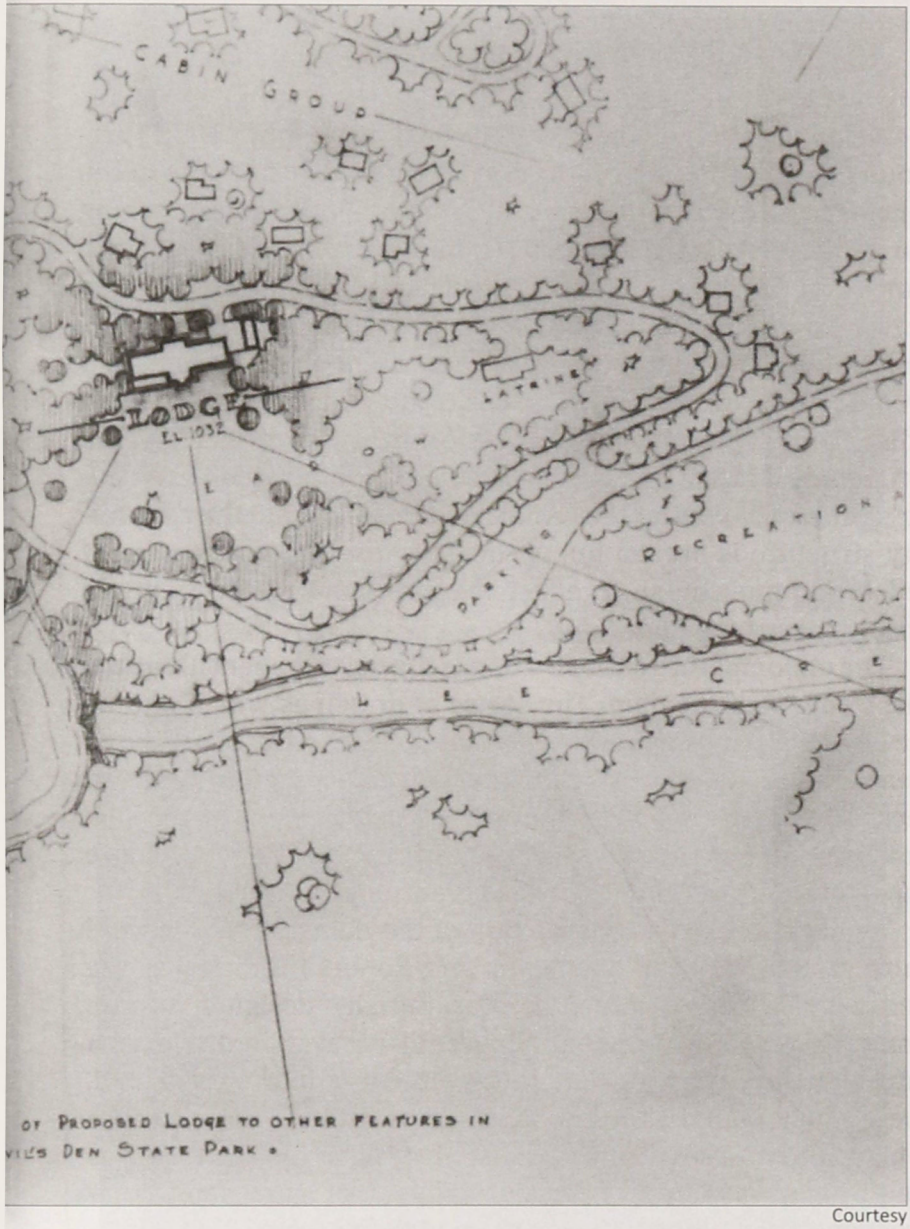
Paul Young Collection

A foot bridge on the upper bridalpath of Devil's Den, probably the same bridge on the Flashback cover, as painted during construction.



The original bridge across Lee Creek, connecting the campgrounds of Devil's Den State Park on boths sides of the creek with the roads to West Fork and Winslow, was built of stone and timber. Its replacement was a steel and concrete bridge.

A sketch shows plans for the development of the valley of Devil's Den


CABIN
GROUP
LODGE
EL. 1032
RECREATION
OF PROPOSED LODGE TO OTHER FEATURES IN
VIL'S DEN STATE PARK.

Courtesy

> in size of stones (are) principles.... a common fault in bridges is too abrupt termination of the parapet, railings or wing wall. These should carry beyond the abutments."[26]

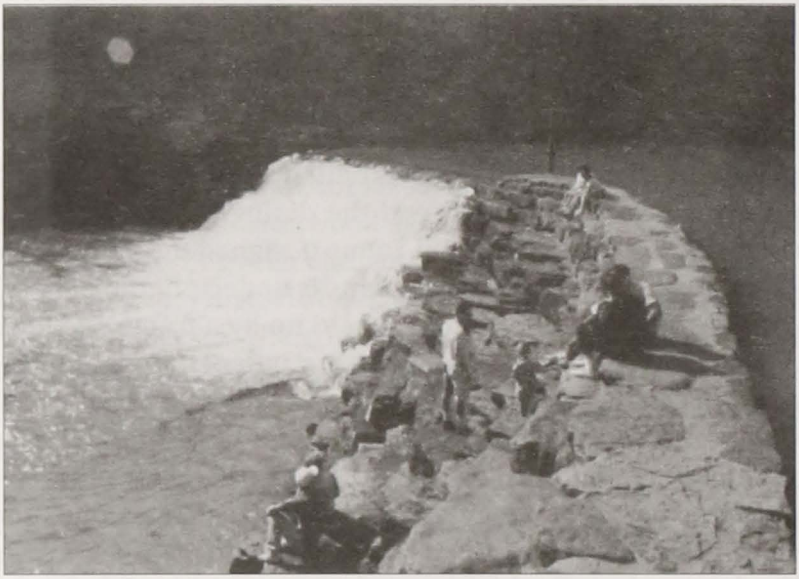
A sketch plan by Robert Kreilick from September 1935 (previous pages) shows a proposed lodge and other features in the concentrated area of the park with a major loop road connecting the lake's edge, dam, bathhouse (now the community building), dam, recreational field, (now a picnic area), cabins and a lodge (never built), This loop road connects to the main road. A second road leads to more cabins. A glance at a more current map prepared by Mike Swanda, Arkansas State Historic Preservation Office, reveals how confusing this original layout has become through successive changes. The connection between the visitor's center (built after the CCC period in 1941) and the community structure is broken up, particularly for discouragement of pedestrian movement. In effect the park now has two entries closely spaced together.

The major feature of Devil's Den is the development along the lake's edge and the dam. The series of drawings which outline the development of the lake edge and the dam reveal the adjustments and changes over the CCC period. This probably occurred because there were a large number of men working at the site, and keeping them busy with a succession of projects was more important than development of a comprehensive plan.

The first step was construction of the dam. Ben Shreve and Rubin Blood were the engineers, and Robert Kreilick was the landscape architect. The dam was initially designed to run straight across the creek, but apparently excavation disclosed a natural rock ledge which lay in a deep curve in the creek bed. The accommodation to this happy circumstance resulted in a dam of added strength and unusual design quality. The dam was built by constructing two parallel walls out of large slabs of native stone, then filling between them with concrete.

It is implied, in Park Structures and Facilities, that adapting a large dam to a natural site is impossible. But this dam, not with-

Construction of the dam at Devil's Den State Park was adapted to the natural rock ledge on the south side of Lee Creek. The dam was built of two walls, an upstream wall and a downstream and then filled with concrete.



standing its substantial size, is tied to the stream bank through an existing rock shelf and with rock work around the lake in a manner that clearly achieves the "impossible". It is one of the outstanding features of the park.

"Before" and "After" drawings show the extensive rock work which allowed public access to the dam, the pond below the dam, and the lake's edge. The falls and pond below the dam was viewed from an overlook which covered a culvert, creating the effect of a spring. At the same time the edge of the lake was filled in with a stone amphitheater which was to become a "seasonal waterfall". The beach was graded to create a shallow swimming area. The concept of a set of steps forming an amphitheater that can become a cascade during wet seasons reveals a sophistication and level of imagination that are not usually ascribed to rustic CCC facilities.

Today the dam serves as a sitting area which inevitably attracts people. However, the overlook has lost its function because trees have been allowed to grow in to block the view. The activity focused on the swimming area has shifted to the more recent swimming pool.

After completion of the dam, the community building was constructed. This structure was designed to provide a dining room, kitchen, bathhouse and pavilion with a flagstone terrace made with enormous slabs of stone. The construction drawings for the structure reveal that it was built in two phases.. The bathhouse was built first (1936) and the dining room, kitchen and pavilion were an addition. Paul Young designed the addition, but the signature on the bathhouse plans is undecipherable.

In the dining room the roof is held up by a frame and series of rafters and ties while the walls are independently made of logs. Structurally, the walls support only a modest portion of the roof load. At Petit Jean Mather Lodge was fabricated with logs and pioneer methods. Heavy logs (2 feet in diameter plus) were required to permit notching the joints. Because the wood members of this kind of log construction are so large they are very difficult to replace. Replacement of some rotted roof timbers re-

Collection of Paul Young

Framing a cabin at Devil's Den. Note the logs scabbed onto the real cabin rafters.

quired hoisting heavy replacement logs and extra support of the walls to carry the considerable loads during the work.

The community building at Devil's Den, on the other hand, was built with more modern techniques, although the rustic appearance is similar. The concrete foundation has stone applied to the exterior. The wall construction is conventional framing with studs, covered with wood sawn and planed at a local mill.

The debate between the advocates of modern methods of construction and historic ones was quite heated within the National Park Service. The committee of regional directors of the CCC work in state parks who put together the publication Park Structures and Facilities were unable to come to agreement on this issue. One faction thought that park structures should not appropriate the look of primitive structures unless they were constructed in the same fashion and with the same materials as the prototypes.

A second faction argued that the old methods of construction were wasteful of materials and used up forests which the park movement in general was attempting to protect.. A middle of the road point of view was that only the most important structures should use the pioneer construction in order to make the public aware of disappearing frontier construction methods, but smaller cabin structures should use more economical methods. Most Arkansas parks use the more contemporary methods and even some of the log cabins have been rebuilt in the modern fashion.

Cabins

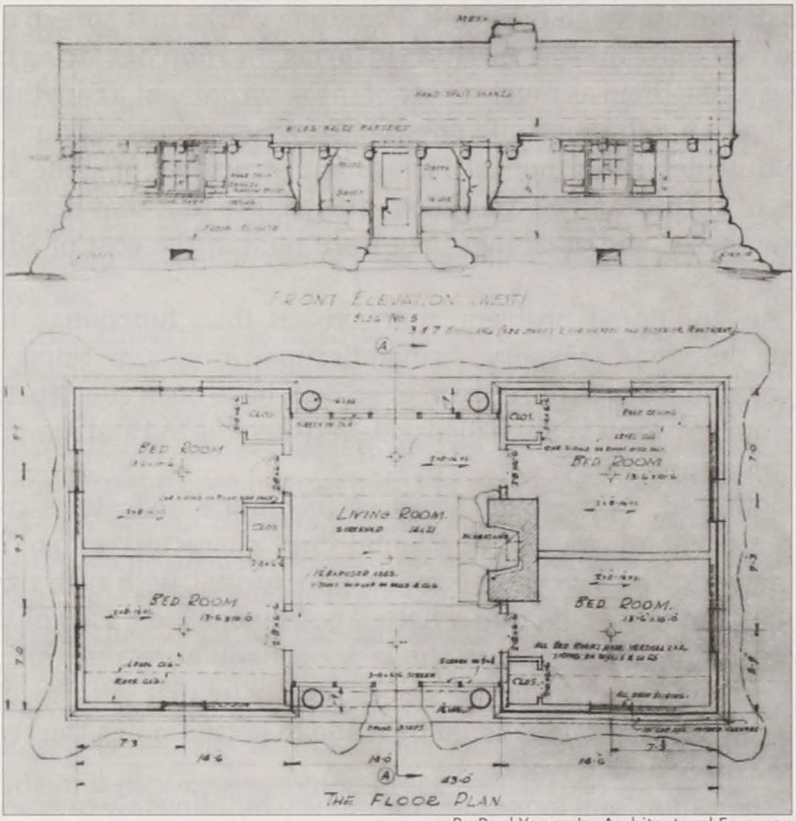
One of the most well-loved features of the CCC parks are the cabins. Their woodland location, their views to the mountains or stream valley, their rustic beauty composed of stone and wood, and their privacy provide an experience hardly found anywhere else. This explains why they are often booked as much as a year in advance.

> "The cabin becomes, in effect private property, serving an infinitesimal portion of the park using public."[27]

Construction costs and rental costs were considered too high. Cabins raised water, sewer, and road building costs. To solve these problems, the NPS recommended cheaper accommodations with compact sleeping areas and an open or screened porch. Costs would also then be lowered through group toilet and bathing facilities as well as provision of limited kitchen facilities.

The ambivalence of the NPS toward the use of cabins can be traced to its philosophical base as a public agent which, first, was interested in preservation of natural sites; second wished to expose all strata of society to the beauty and beneficial effects of these sites; and third, had a strong belief in ideals of democracy and equality. A reflection of these ideals is apparent from the following:

> "It must be pointed out as an abuse of democratic principles if the benefits of park areas are withdrawn



By Paul Young Jr., Architectural Foreman

A 1934 floor plan and elevation of a cabin at Devil's Den.

from availability to the many for the selfish enjoyment of the few."[28]

At Devil's Den, the original cabin plans reflect the NPS goal of the most accommodations for the least expense.

In one cabin, there are only single bedrooms surrounding a screened living space with a fireplace. A second cabin has more luxurious accommodation, including a fireplace in each room as well as bathrooms, showers and hot water. In modern times cabins were upgraded to include heating and air conditioning. Beyond the function and cost issue, it is the visual and structural

quality of these cabins that have given so many users so much satisfaction through the years. The stone works that spread out into the landscape, the variation in forms, and porches facing the view, make them as much a part of the environment as anything built as a habitation could possibly be. A newspaper account to the time describes them as "handsome structures of stone and logs of such cunningly designed architecture that they seem to grow there," and adds that they were built at the cost of $300 each.[29]

An additional problem, more visual than functional, has been the stone masonry. As handicapped ramps, parking lot edges, and walls at the edge of overlooks have been constructed of stone in recent years, a disparity between the old and new has become apparent.

Battered walls, an unevenness in outline and stone size, and a predominance of horizontal lines characterize the CCC stonework. The new work is much more formal, with even sized stones, straight walls, and a flatter, patchwork look. Part of the problem, of course, lies in the lack of manpower and skill to quarry and move the larger stones. It may be that with special equipment, an attempt could be made to better match the style of the original CCC work.

The cabins and lodges or community buildings were graced by handmade chairs, tables and settees. Outside areas had rougher picnic tables and benches. All of this furniture has a simple, straightforward quality. Other accoutrements are lamps and door hinges made in the blacksmith shop. There is one set of lights at Devil's Den which is more of a tour-de-force than anything else. Casing and bulb are sunk in a large chunk of stone. The result, although unusual, was probably not worth the effort.

Landscape

The major investment in CCC man hours was in the underpinnings of the park: its roads, trails, utilities, reforestation, and picnic areas. Road work took many months of effort, even with the large crews available. Clearing, leveling and filling required

a fleet of dump trucks as well as the use of a road grader. Machinery was used to wash and crush gravel obtained from the site. The gravel surfaces allowed year round use of the roads. Careful attention was paid to cut areas and banks that needed stabilization as well as guard rails. One of the most characteristic features of the roads and parking lots which border the use areas are the large boulders set into the ground. These make a permanent border, because once installed, the are virtually immovable.

Even culverts and head walls were considered worthy of quality design. The NPS suggested, "that the head wall, or facing, be informal and inconspicuous. The culvert itself could be constructed of stone, concrete or iron, but the end wall should extend into the opening to hide the man made materials."xxx

The design of culverts was not always purely utilitarian. At Devil's Den a culvert emerges under the overlook near the dam creating the effect of a spring.

More than any other element it is the quality of the trails that distinguishes the CCC parks. The views afforded by the trails attracts people from all over Arkansas and from neighboring states. It is the trail that takes the visitor out beyond the busy roads and picnic or camping areas to see the myriad forms of nature. It is in the trail work where the clearest expression of the philosophy of "blending" with natural form is expressed. The most arresting aspect of these trails lies in the mystery of their origin: Were these rock steps already here? Or, did someone fill in one or two rocks to create a set? Is this bridge formed from a natural ledge where water washed away the soil, or was it placed there by a CCC crew? The NPS recommends that:

> "the effort should be to give constructed steps the appearance of natural ledges. . . it is most important that the width of treads vary. Rocks forming cheeks at either side of the steps should vary in horizontal alignment, as well as in height, and should be tied and blended into the setting by being occasionally and irregularly extended some distance into the vegetation to either

side... risers should not exceed 6" in height."[31]

To construct the trails, rocks were pried loose from nearby hillsides and imbedded deeply enough so they could not work loose. Over time, however, some of the original stone work has been eroded or become dislodged. Where it has been rebuilt, the fundamental principles of imbedding large stones and the need to blend stonework into its surroundings have often been forgotten. Also, to slow erosion and drain the paths, railroad tie timbers have been installed. What is an acceptable trail building method in other parks often seems out of place on the CCC trails.

Trail bridges were often designed to cross streams and gullies. Often built of logs mortared into stone buttresses, they were not repairable in their original form because there was no way to replace the logs. Their design satisfied every standard of quality save one- that of long term maintenance and restoration.

At the most spectacular viewpoints along the trails, shelters were built. One shelter at Devil's Den was singled out for praise by the NPS and featured in their Park Structures publication. The shelter still exists but the roof structure of logs has long since been replaced with one of conventional framing. Designed by Paul Young, it still exhibits the vigorous scale of log timbers and handsome rock work. Its large-scaled, massive structure befits its location on a prominent bluff, and gives the impression of clinging like a limpet despite the force of wind and weather. A picture of this shelter is currently featured on the internet information on Devil's Den. Compared to many of the contemporary shelters with their spindly quality and lack of character, those early shelters better fit their surroundings. Similarly Paul Young's original design for the entrance sign to Devil's Den shows more deft attention to the structure than to the sign itself.

Post Script

Most of the research for this report was undertaken in 1989 by myself and by Karen Rollet, assistant professor of landscape architecture and at the time a single mother. We had cooperation from Arkansas State Parks and a modest grant of state funds.

The objective was to evaluate the facilities of the five major state parks developed by the CCC during the 1930s and were thus reaching the limit of their productive life. It was anticipated that major efforts would be necessary to maintain, restore or replace much of what had been created. It was hoped that the resulting report might assist in evaluation of what was most deserving of the efforts to preserve the CCC legacy.

Unfortunately, a personal tragedy, the extended illness and death of Karen Rollets' daughter and the pressure of other commitments precluded our collaborating on the necessary editing and mechanics of realizing the report's publication. The draft report, in a limited number of copies and with a very modest distribution was well received at the time. The Arkansas Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects issued the authors an Honor Award in October 1990 in "Recognition of Outstanding Professional Achievement and Richard Davies, Director of Arkansas Parks and Tourism was most complementary. Both Karen and I have since retired and the need to significantly update the work has conspired to preclude our publishing the work. The work at Devil's Den since has been exemplary. Great care has been exercised in both restoration and new construction.

There are now 52 state parks in Arkansas. They are categorized as Adventure Parks, Mountain Parks, History Parks, and Lake and River Parks. They are a major source of revenue for the state. Devil's Den continues to be one of the most popular of the parks. The Army Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District also has 180 public parks and access areas in Arkansas and Southern Missouri. It has recently announced significant proposed cutbacks in its services because of major funding constraints. There are 29 parks with 500 campsites in Arkansas. Some will be shut down and there will be a shorter season for the rest. This will place even greater pressure on the state parks. There are also National Parks and National Forests in Arkansas. Adding to the funding problems are natural disasters. The Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District suffered $33.5 million hit from flooding in

2011. Devil's Den experienced a flood in 1960 that took out its dam. In 2011 a flood did minor damage to the reconstructed dam, but deposited so much debris in Lake Devil that it had to be closed and drained to haul if off.

The National Parks are similarly stressed:

> "The most significant issue now facing the national parks is a $600 million shortfall in the National Park Service's annual operating budget!"[32]
>
> "The CCC took millions of unemployed young men off the streets, gave them hope, helped them to be self supporting, and build self-respect and taught them how to be men. Many learned to read and write, obtained diplomas, or learned a trade. A large percentage served their country honorably and with distinction in World War II".[33]

Devil's Den is considered to be the best preserved CCC camp in the United States. There is a relatively short self-guided tour of the CCC camp. Clearly a program like the CCC would have many useful applications today. There is a great backlog in needed maintenance. Arkansas is making significant efforts to expand and improve its facilities to meet the increasing demands. It would benefit from a national program like the CCC.

End Notes

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Reports about Henderson School from The American Missionary

EDITOR'S NOTE: After a mention of the Henderson School in the Fall 2012 issue of Flashback, *we provide some reports published in* The American Missionary, *the monthly organ of the American Missionary Association of New York.*

The American Missionary Association provided support for Henderson School from its creation in 1868 as the first public school in Arkansas. The school was organized to teach the sons and daughters of African American residents of Fayetteville, most of them recently emancipated during the Civil War.

The school was organized by Ebeneazor Enskia Henderson and taught by him and his daughter, Clara. The American Missionary Association purchased the property on Olive Avenue on which the school was built from Lafayette Gregg for $1. The association helped build and furnish a two-room brick school.

An early mention in *The American Missionary* comes in its December 1882 issue, when the publication mistakenly refers to the school as the "Howard School Building." It reports:

> At Fayetteville, Ark., our Howard School Building has been overhauled, and in it we have re-opened our own school.[1]

Two months later, *The American Missionary* published a report from B.F. Foster, the teacher and minister who along with his wife had taken charge of the church and school, and, at that time, were holding both church and school meetings in the building:

> SCHOOL AND CHURCH WORK AT FAYETTEVILLE, ARK.[2]
> BY REV. B. F. FOSTER
>
> We began work here on the 5th of September, and opened school under very favorable auspices. We have

had 92 pupils enrolled. Our school is the only one for colored children within a radius of 65 miles. We are giving some attention to church work, and are using our school-house as a place of worship. We have service every Sabbath morning at eleven o'clock—the audiences are large. We are gratified to say that the influence of the teachers takes fast hold upon both parent and pupil. We have Sunday-school every afternoon at three o'clock, and these services are largely attended. Thanksgiving day was appropriately commemorated. A sermon was preached in them morning by the missionary pastor. All who were present seemed deeply impressed with the word. The chapel was beautifully and tastefully festooned with autumn leaves and berries, and the walls were embellished with appropriate mottoes of the sacred Scriptures. At seven o'clock in the evening a very large number of patrons and friends of the school gathered, and partook of a repast prepared as a thanksgiving token for them by the teachers and pupils. Toasts were responded to by the several pastors of the town and teachers. I said we had service in our chapel at 11 a.m. every Sunday. We could induce as many to come in the evening if we had lamps to light up our chapel. Equally as good results would come from a weekly prayer-meeting, if we had sufficient lights. We heartily accept this opportunity of asking the friends of some of our Northern churches to

Ebeneazor Enskia Henderson

give us their old ones—chandelier lamps. The Lord's Supper was celebrated the first time, since beginning our work here, last Sunday. Truly, the Lord was with his people on that solemn occasion. At this service the missionary pastor's first and only little daughter was baptized, which increased the interest of the meeting. To carry this blessed Supper to Christ's brethren and sisters, Mrs. Foster's pie-pans were used for the emblems of his body, and two borrowed mugs for the emblem of his blood. From this the friends of God's poor will see we would thank them very much to assist us in getting a communion set. The people among whom we are working are very poor. Few of them have homes.

Foster may be the same B.F. Foster who had taught at Batesville as late as 1880. In June, *The American Missionary* included a report of organization of a church in conjunction with the school at Fayetteville:

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.[3]

A church was organized at Fayetteville, Ark., with nine members, April 15. Supt. Roy and Rev. B.F. Foster, the pastor of the church, were in attendance. At the first communion season the church was made happy in the use of a new communion set and an outfit of chapel lamps from Rev. Geo. M. Boynton's people, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Two months later, *The American Missionary* included a report from H.D. Foster, the wife of B.F. Foster:

The South[4]

HENDERSON SCHOOL, FAYETTEVILLE, ARK.

By Mrs. H.D. Foster

The Henderson School closed its first year of nine months with examinations Thursday, May 24th. A large

number of interested parents and friends came in to inquire and see for themselves what their children had been doing for the year. After listening to various recitations and exercises, they expressed themselves highly pleased.

Thursday evening the annual exhibition came off, and about 400 were present. At half past eight o'clock, the pupils marched into the primary room. They made a grand appearance, being neatly and some of them very prettily dressed. The programme consisted of nineteen parts, interspersed with good music. Some of the pieces given were very pleasing. The calisthenic exercises and the selections were all well rendered and won many complimentary remarks, not only from colored people, but also from prominent white families of the city. It is something unusual to see the ladies of the latter class out.

Those who had seen the scholars at the beginning and at the end of the session noticed a striking improvement in their personal appearance. The intellectual, moral and spiritual culture had left its stamp upon their countenances, and it was exhibited in their deportment.

Throughout the year special attention has been given to our Mission Sunday-school, out of which has grown a little church. During the precious revival of January, some of our pupils gave their hearts to Christ. In all our successes and discouragements the Heavenly Father has been very near us. Hon. J.H. Van Hoose, a correspondent of the *Arkansas Democrat*, the leading journal of the State, which is published at the Capital, a citizen of high standing in the State for forty years, and thirty years in this place, asked to give an impromptu speech, in which he expressed his surprise at the progress made. The following, clipped from the above-named journal, written by this gentleman, will explain

the sentiments of the citizens here toward our work:

"Prof. Foster (colored) and his wife, formerly of Little Rock, have just closed a nine month's school at the brick school-house in the northeast part of Fayetteville. They were at first employed by our school directors to teach a three months' school for the colored portion of our district, but they continued to teach six months longer for a very small consideration paid them by the patrons of the school and the American Missionary Association. The examination exercises closed Thursday night with a public exhibition. The school room was neat and clean and gorgeously decorated with festoons and wreaths of evergreens and flowers, and the house filled with an appreciative audience, the best of order prevailed, and your correspondent was delighted with the evidences of improvement in the manner and conduct of all who had been so fortunate as to be under the influence and training of Prof. Foster and his accomplished assistant, Mrs. Foster.

The next mention of the school comes six months later when news of a new minister and teacher are reported. The Rev. J.M. Shippen of Washington, D.C., is noted as minister, and a Miss S.P. Kingston of Talladega, Ala., is noted as a teacher.[5]

A similar report shows up three years later in 1887 when a new minister and teacher, Rev. Willis R. Polk, formerly of New Iberia, Louisiana, is listed in charge of the school.[6] Polk appears to have studied theology at Lincoln University in Oxford, Pennsylvania.[7] However, *The American Missionary* reported later that year that Rev. Polk had died.

DEATH OF REV. WILLIS POLK[8]

Died, at his home in Fayetteville, Ark., after a lingering illness, Rev. Willis Polk, pastor of the Colored Congregational Church of that place. He came to Fay-

> etteville in the fall of 1884, and took charge of the public school for the colored people; and up until the time he was disabled by sickness, he labored in the schoolroom during the week, and preached in the little church, which he had organized, on the Sabbath. His education and his gifts as a preacher were above the average of his race. He met death calmly and peacefully, and died in the blessed hope of a home in heaven. He was kindly nursed and provided for by the members of his little flock and others, during his long sickness, and his mortal remains were reverently laid in the tomb by the same kind hands. He leaves a wife and four small children to mourn his loss, and the little flock to which he ministered without a shepherd. J.N.

The death of Rev. Polk effectively ended the American Missionary Association's role in supporting the church and Henderson School. *The American Missionary* reported neither a minister nor a teacher involved with the school in 1888 and 1889. Two years later in 1991, the association announced the dissolution of its support in 1891:

> General Survey: The South[9]
>
> In Arkansas, we continue the church work at Little Rock, which is mainly supported by the people there, but decline to renew either school or church work at Fayetteville, because there is little prospect of usefulness to the church, and the educational work can be carried on by the city in our building, granted for that purpose.

The building continued to be used as a school until 1939, when a new school for African American children, Lincoln School, was built on Willow Avenue. The building is still standing and is used as a residence.

End Notes

1. *The American Missionary*, Vol. 36, Issue 12 (December 1882) American Missionary Association, New York, 360.
2. Ibid., Vol. 37, Issue 2 (February 1883), 53-54.
3. Ibid., Vol. 37, Issue 6 (June 1883), 179.
4. Ibid., Vol. 37, Issue 8 (August 1883), 239-240.
5. Ibid., Vol. 38, Issue 2 (February 1884), 49.
6. Ibid., Vol. 41, Issue 2 (February 1887), 46.
7. *Catalog of the Officers and Students of Lincoln University, Formerly Ashmun Institute. 1869-70.* Vol. 12 (H.L. Brinton, Oxford, Pa.: 1869) 14. Although titled 1869-70, the catalog appears to have listed students from the 1868-69 school year.
8. *The American Missionary*, Vol. 41, Issue 10 (October 1887) , 296.
9. Ibid., Vol. 45, Issue 11 (December 1891), 387.

Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Vol. 20, Issue 115 (December 1859), Page 135, published the following note:

Editor's Drawer

An Indian in the Cherokee nation contributes the following:

When ex-Governor Roane was a young man he was at Fayetteville during the sitting of the Circuit Court for the spring term of 1843. A case was called of Dillingham vs. May, in which the plaintiff sued for an old distillery. The senior counsel for plaintiff was General Sneed. The General called upon young Roane to "pitch in" with him, and make the opening speech. He did so. At its conclusion, which was superior to the speeches that Washington County was accustomed to hear, one of the jury, "Thomas B----, of Arkansas," was so carried away with the eloquence displayed by the young attorney that he sprung to his feet in the middle of the courtroom, and exclaimed, "Them's my sentiments prezactly! You are on the right scent, for I knowed your dad before you was born!"

Dillingham gained his case.

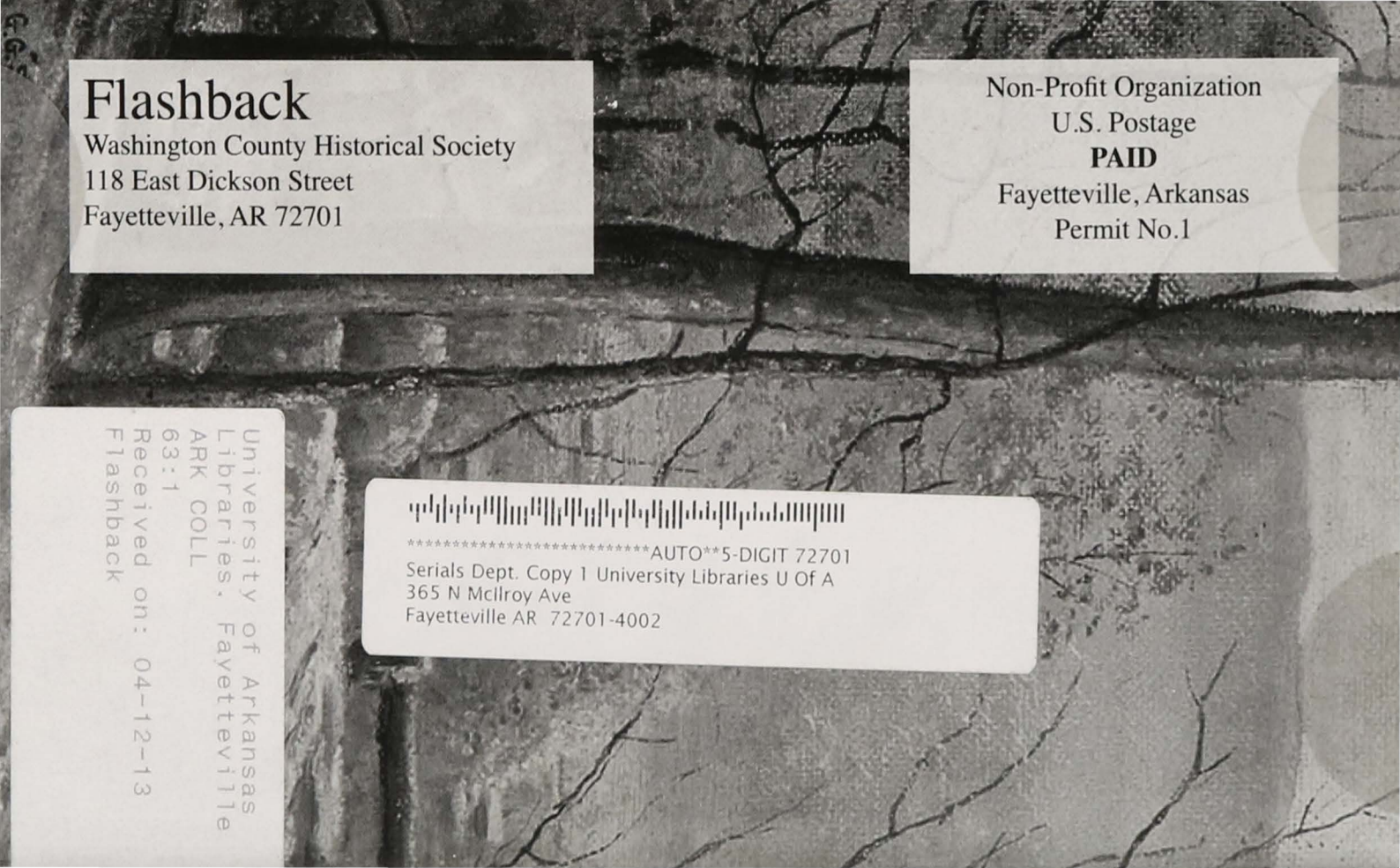
Planned Gifts

Making charitable gifts to the Washington County Historical Society will enable it to continue and expand its programs.

If you are making regular gifts to the Washington County Historical Society or would like to start, you may find it beneficial to set up or give:

1. A **charitable lead trust** that will pay income to WCHS for a set period.
2. A **charitable remainder trust** that will allow you to transfer property to a trust set up for WCHS without paying capital gains tax on the sale of the property.
3. **Appreciated securities** at their current value and take an income tax deduction for the year up to 30 percent of adjusted gross income.
4. **Gifts from your retirement account** that could be an integral part of planning for those withdrawals.
5. An **irrevocable life insurance trust** that could own your life insurance, when it no longer serves its purpose, to make a charitable gift that could reduce the estate's tax bill.

There are a number of ways to enhance your retirement plans while still providing for your charitable interests and making gifts you never dreamed possible. Consult with your financial adviser on other ways you can make charitable donations. These planned gifts will provide added tax benefits for you and your heir while helping to support the vital mission of the Washington County Historical Society for years to come.



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